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RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI 1107
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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA: GREAT LAKES SPECIAL ADVISOR WOLPE
DISCUSSES ENHANCED USG GREAT LAKES ENGAGEMENT

Ref: Pretoria 2181, Kinshasa 976, Kigali 736, Kampala 1304

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1. (SBU) Summary: Great Lakes Special Advisor Howard Wolpe's message on Washington's enhanced Great Lakes engagement was welcomed warmly during the Special Advisor's October 30-November 2 visit to South Africa. Wolpe renewed contacts with Deputy Foreign Minister Ebrahim, SAG Great Lakes Special Envoy Dhumisani Kumalo, Belgian Ambassador (former Great Lakes Special Envoy) Jan Mutton and Head of MONUC's South Africa office Mujahid Alam, as well as an Institute for Global Dialogue think tank team led by former DFM Aziz Pahad. The visit helped open doors for greater local engagement on Great Lakes issues. End summary.

Deputy FM Welcomes U.S. Great Lakes Envoy

2.. (SBU) Deputy Minister for International Relations and Cooperation (DFM) Ebrahim Ebrahim welcomed Special Advisor Wolpe and Ambassador Gips for a November 2 meeting at ruling African National Congress (ANC) headquarters. Also present for the South African Government were South Africa's Great Lakes Special Envoy Dhumisani Kumalo and Director of U.S. Affairs at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) Fadl Nacerodien. In addition to Ambassador Gips, Wolpe was accompanied by POL Counselor, Great Lakes Desk Officer Keith, and Deputy POL Counselor.

3. (SBU) Special Advisor Wolpe briefed Ebrahim on the Administration's desire to restore balance to U.S. Africa policy by reinvigorating our engagement on Kenya, Nigeria, and the Great Lakes. Wolpe said his mission was to restore the kind of active partnership on the Great Lakes that existed with former EU Great Lakes Special Envoy Aldo Ajello and himself during the Clinton Administration. Ebrahim said he remembered Wolpe from Burundi talks. Wolpe briefed Ebrahim on his travel to engage European capitals, where officials had complained about the recent drift in international engagement on the Great Lakes. Wolpe spoke of energizing the network of Great Lakes envoys, and expanding the Great Lakes Contract Group to include all stakeholders, such as Norway, Sweden, Angola, and China. Wolpe said there are plans for the Great Lakes envoys to travel to Angola and China early in 2010.

4. (SBU) Ebrahim welcomed Wolpe's plans, stressing that South Africa has been involved in trying to bring lasting peace to the Great Lakes since well before the Sun City Accords of 2002. They agreed that efforts had yielded concrete results in Burundi. The DFM said that the approximately 100 South African peacekeepers

remaining in Burundi for VIP protection will be withdrawn at the end of 2009. Kumalo said the SAG will send a "senior delegate" to Bujumbura to sign "various" agreements at the end of December when the SANDF contingent is due to leave.

15. (SBU) Ebrahim and Wolpe agreed that the security situation in DRC will remain precarious as long as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) remains a threat and as long as Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) are not regularly paid and disciplined. The DFM and Wolpe welcomed progress in the relationship between DRC and Rwanda, including the recent exchange of ambassadors (please see Ref C). Wolpe, DFM Ebrahim and Kumalo compared notes on the military training and assistance that the U.S. and SAG are providing to the GDRC. They agreed that curbing the alarming rate of gender-based violence perpetrated by the military and securing some assurance that trained units will maintain their capabilities were enormous challenges. Ebrahim and Kumalo welcomed Wolpe's efforts to harmonize donor approaches to FARDC military training.

16. (SBU) Ebrahim commented that a regional approach was needed to address linked conflicts and agreed with Wolpe on the importance of the DRC-Rwanda relationship. Ambassador Kumalo credited collaborative leadership training provided by the Woodrow Wilson Center with creating possibilities to work with top leadership to find solutions and hopes that will continue. Wolpe noted that he planned to raise the possibility during his upcoming visit to Kinshasa, adding that he sought to build a partnership with the GDRC and President Kabila.

Former DFM Hosts Roundtable

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17. (SBU) Former DFM Aziz Pahad welcomed Wolpe, the Ambassador, Pol Counselor, Great Lakes Desk Officer, and Deputy Pol Counselor on November 2 and introduced the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) policy think tank team led by Dr. Siphamandla Zondi, Program Director for Africa and Dr. Francis Ikome, Program Director, Multilateral. Also present was Research Associate (and long-time South Africa resident Amcit) Francis Kornegay. Wolpe briefed the IGD team on his mission to reinvigorate Great Lakes dialogue and to strengthen and expand the envoys network. He spoke of the FDLR as the most serious threat to peace in the DRC, and the need for better measures to protect civilians, including possible MONUC-FARDC joint planning.

18. (SBU) Asked what the USG will do to combat gender-based violence in eastern DRC, Wolpe spoke of USG efforts to promote military justice and provide mobile courts. Wolpe added that the fundamental challenge is to move the players in DRC from zero-sum thinking to collaboration. He spoke of the Woodrow Wilson Center's efforts prior to the 2006 elections and expressed the hope that leadership training for the FARDC military command might make a difference. Wolpe spoke to the need for donors to harmonize military training doctrines. He also raised the possibility of conditioning election assistance to progress on security sector reform.

19. (SBU) Asked what donors are doing to establish a viable economy in Burundi, Wolpe said regional integration will play a key role in Burundi's economic future, and he pointed to coordinated action among donors to support regional solutions, including the International Conference on the Great Lakes he was about to attend, as well as the Friends of the Great Lakes led by Canada and the Netherlands.

Comment

110. (SBU) The Wolpe visit, capped by a dinner hosted by the ADCM, was a good opportunity for the Mission to engage the SAG on Great Lakes policy, an area where we enjoy deep and broad agreement.

